

# Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado

---

Volume 7

Number 2 *McNair Special Issue*

Article 7

---

May 2019

## Frankenstein's Fixations: A Psychoanalytic Evolutionary Approach to Childhood, Sexuality, and Outsiders

Kaitlin Harris

*University of Northern Colorado*, [harr4321@bears.unco.edu](mailto:harr4321@bears.unco.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj>

Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Harris, Kaitlin (2019) "Frankenstein's Fixations: A Psychoanalytic Evolutionary Approach to Childhood, Sexuality, and Outsiders," *Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado*: Vol. 7 : No. 2 , Article 7.  
Available at: <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj/vol7/iss2/7>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado by an authorized editor of Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. For more information, please contact [Jane.Monson@unco.edu](mailto:Jane.Monson@unco.edu).

# Frankenstein's Fixations: A Psychoanalytic Evolutionary Approach to Childhood, Sexuality, and Outsiders

Kaitlin Harris

Mentors: Tracey Sedinger, Ph.D., & Sarah Cornish, Ph.D., English

**Abstract:** By using *Frankenstein* as a case study, my project explores readers' and characters' experiences with others who might appear threatening. Furthermore, I intend to apply theories from psychoanalysis and evolutionary psychology to deconstruct the ambiguity of relations with others and the self in answering: can a psychoanalytic reading of *Frankenstein* display how evolutionary literary criticism, sublime, and the uncanny affect and inform us about human relations. My argument has displayed how castigating a living being away from society recapitulates an evolutionary cycle of unconscious abuse which the critics, themselves, have also encountered.

**Keywords:** *Frankenstein*, psychoanalysis, abuse, literary criticism

"It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. By the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs" (Shelley 60). Ironical as it may be to find the creation of a monster an accomplishment, the quote above highlights the dilemma Victor Frankenstein faces by creating something he should love and wants to love, but instead, only sees a future of evil in a self-fulfilling prophecy. By using *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley as a case study, my paper explores characters' experiences with others who might appear as a threat. Specifically, I explicate on the interactions between characters in the book and how understanding *Frankenstein* has the potential to impact empathy negatively or positively for readers. Most people are guilty of ostracizing an outsider at one point or another. I am hoping the theories at which I am looking and the experiences of the author and critics can explain unconscious motives in the human race that makes us treat others unfairly. This may make the reader want revenge against Frankenstein or the creature, but hopefully, it makes people understand what drives them. After all, readers and writers place their values and appreciation of books from their own experiences and morals.

Throughout my analysis, based on the concepts of the sublime and uncanny affect, I

deconstruct the ambiguity of relations with others and the self, particularly by looking at Frankenstein's monster and his mirroring of Victor, which Victor perceives as foreign. Victor and his creation are more alike than different, regardless of what they believe. There are many reasons as to why the sublime and the uncanny affect can perpetuate themselves in different ways through a psychoanalytic lens with a look at human evolution. As Slavoj Žižek has explained, the sublime object is "that which can only be imagined as the incarnation of a pure desire beyond any recognizable object," or what he calls, "[t]he objectification beyond a certain lack" ("The Sublime Object of Ideology" 208). Desire that lacks substance leads to peculiarity and a yearning of familiarity. The uncanny affect is that which arises from all that is unconsciously similar to the point of becoming consciously peculiar. The uncanny is the opposite of the sublime. The sublime is that which is different from what one has known, while the uncanny is something familiar and near that one wishes were sublime and kept at a distance. Even earlier, Edmund Burke described the sublime as something that creates ideas of pain and danger and is analogous to or is terrible ("The Sublime and Beautiful" 7).

I look at the evolution of the characters and real-life representations of humans to make sense of the unconscious attributes of the uncanny and sublime as well. For example, incest can be interpreted in *Frankenstein* when using an

uncanny lens, but an evolutionary investigation of characters and even the theorists, with the Westermarck effect, which displays the sublimity of forbidden and platonic love, is also useful in areas such as the sexuality component. In the end, my research on the childhood elements of trauma as the uncanny, the sexual elements of repression which can make the sublime seem uncanny, and the neglect and abuse of the outsiders as the sublime are the bases as to why the characters are damned.

More interpretations of the novel have come to be useful rather than just the theoretical perspectives that preceded or were concurrent with the main character's experiences and portrayals at the time of the novel's publishing. An important note is that Shelley seems to agree with the idea that one specific theory does not have enough breadth to explain the complexity of human nature. In "The Evolution Drive in Contemporary Psychoanalysis: A Reply to Gill," Janet L. Bachant explains how differences in culture come from the undifferentiated matrix of libido and ego that is within everyone. The contrasting nature of the undifferentiated differentiation is the oxymoronic nature of the similarities in us causing the differences in us.

Frankenstein and the creature's relationship explicates the undifferentiated differentiation with the creature's place as the double of Frankenstein. Mladen Dolar explains that anxiety is a lack of another lack. Anxiety is the lack of lacking a carefree attitude, such as caring too much while attempting to be carefree, in, "I Shall be with You on Your Wedding-Night": Lacan and the Uncanny." With the role of the double, anxiety runs rampant, and it is a form of extinction avoidance. Though Frankenstein and his monster fear each other, they keep each other alive. Frankenstein's monster takes the place of the double in the mirror stage that is impossible to interpret until its gaze reaches its creator. The creature's eyes signify emptiness that is terrible, and the emptiness represents replication of the role of the father. Victor sees his failure as a creator in the creature's eyes, and he sees the deepest evil of himself within the creature. The

role is a secondary gain for the creature when all else that is preferred fails since he has power over his creator by showing him that neglecting his family and friends to create a "son" without a true capacity for relation will not foster any other positive relations. However, the creature's voice and gaze are repressed, and his place as the object gets in the way. All in all, the father figure encapsulates a solemn, dull role that is a hindrance to his woman or child's lives ("Grimaces of the Real" 56).

In his article, "Androgyny Vs. Bifurcation: A Psychological Reading of Frankenstein," David Ketterer explains how a fearful, neglectful, controlling Frankenstein splits himself into two representations, the creature, onto which he projects docile feminization, and the victim, which he interprets as his true being. The feminine and masculine presences inside of both worsen when they elicit fear and hatred towards one another. Self-idealization leads to the hatred and shame. Harry Keyishian explains in "Vindictiveness and the Search for Glory in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein," that self-idealization leads to hate because pride can make someone hate their real self and, then, they hate their idealized self in consequence. Furthermore, someone, such as Frankenstein and his "monster," will likely lose compassion and grow a need for vindication due to neglect. The research in the article describes Frankenstein's overflow of pride and vindication. Specifically, in this paper, I show how Frankenstein uses self-idealization and then, faces a central inner conflict while Frankenstein's monster also thinks vindication could be useful for society. Frankenstein could be seeking revenge for his mother's death and experiencing conflicting thoughts about his love and brotherly affection for Elizabeth.

Thus, the cycle of abuse begins with Victor Frankenstein's feelings of neglect and trauma. Trauma is that in which the mind refuses to consciously recognize a traumatic event, so the unconscious represses it. Neglect is feeling deserted by parental figures or authority of whom you were left under control. The cycle of abuse comes from all that Frankenstein has done to his

creature based on the neglect Frankenstein experienced upon his mother's death. He then imposes the neglect upon his creature. Furthermore, he is the ultimate unreliable narrator in the book. Victor Frankenstein creates a child-like figure and becomes disgusted when his feminine parental role begins. Frankenstein experiences this phenomenon as an uncanny affect regarding his creature. Though Frankenstein went to all the trouble to use alchemy to create a human-like being out of dead people's parts, the familiarity of something unconscious within the creature haunts Frankenstein. Frankenstein's disgust in his parental role seems to be a hatred of a motherly role. He seems to take the place of a typical father of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who wants a child to claim as a possession rather than a responsibility, but without a wife to help, and with negligence of the child. In the end of the paper, I will summarize how and why Frankenstein's selfishness shows his insecurity and his own identity as a sublime to what he recognizes as himself, his search for compliments, and his desire to be respected as a parent figure to replace the Oedipus Complex which he uncannily introjected towards the creature.

The dream which Frankenstein experiences is the core of being able to extrapolate a psychoanalytic reading of repression. This dream is the first situation in the novel where a vision of Frankenstein's mother, Catherine, and his love, Elizabeth is encapsulated in a symbolism of death acquainted with the feelings begotten by the creation's birth. In Frankenstein's dream, he begins to kiss Elizabeth after he happens upon her in the street, but then she dies, and, in a classic example of Oedipal Complex, her features morph into Frankenstein's mother. This is where it is evident that Elizabeth, at the very least, is the replacement for Frankenstein's missed nurturance from his mother. One could interpret that this foreshadows the lack of love in the creature's life, and the lack of nurturance from his own parent, as if he were dead as well. All the intellect and imagination Frankenstein has leads to delusions towards the end when he believes his loved ones

are truly alive and that he must be to blame for their ostensible death.

Victor Frankenstein's complex is based on unconscious hatred towards his father after the loss of his mother's care. The slight hatred towards his father is uncanny even to him, and this shows his own childlike nature of being unfulfilled and wanting to be protected. Frankenstein blames his father for not letting him learn more about the alchemist novels he is interested in, and when his father calls the books trash, it just lifts Frankenstein's curiosity. He wishes that his father would have explained the true dangers of alchemy which he explains in the following quote. "In my education, my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors" (Shelley 56). Frankenstein's feelings of repression from his father lead to a feeling of incompleteness. Frankenstein's issues with repression and neglect manifest from the trauma that he then subjects the creature to. The traumatic memory remains, unchanged in the unconscious, and the affect, or emotional energy surrounding the event, is fixed ("*Civilization and its Discontents*" 30). The uncanny affect perpetuates and is perpetuated by trauma. Frankenstein begins to see his family as merely complementary assets to his life rather than a support system. He feels neglected, so he trivializes his family in comparison to his project. He says, "I thought of returning to my friends and my native town, when an incident happened that protracted my stay" (Shelley 55). Referring to his family as friends manifests the odd connection to them.

Incest and multiple unconscious role fulfillments of desire are a surprisingly common theme in *Frankenstein*. The psychological inspection of incest is where biological investigations also come to be necessary. The conflict within the Frankenstein family occurs between the Westermarck Effect's de-eroticization of family members versus the impact of the Oedipalization of desire, with their eventual embodiment in Elizabeth, Frankenstein's "more than sister." The Westermarck effect delves into the idea that the avoidance of marriage develops

from a friendly or familial relationship in which one has been raised in close proximity with the other individual, and it occurs for no other reason other than that of "shame". One should also be desensitized to sexual attraction to someone after close relational proximity during childhood (*The History of Human Marriage* 317). Shame is sufficient to control unnatural biological urges that do not lead to successful procreation. The repression of Frankenstein's urges for Elizabeth and his mother are displaced for the creature, but it begets trauma as well. The creature fills a void for Frankenstein which was created by the inability to be with Elizabeth and the death of Frankenstein's mother. Elizabeth's death finalized the Westermarck effect's necessity. This is where the cycle begins again and affects the son of Frankenstein.

To consider more about the neglect of need and desire, J.S. Price examines the conflict within the Frankenstein family. Elizabeth's death signifies the Westermarck effect in action. The death also symbolizes forced neglect that leads to inner-turmoil. After neglect manifests to one's consciousness as an issue that was repressed, repression of this knowledge can occur more in defiance of admitting weakness and to go back to the mind's comfort zone, and one's own issues of their true character due to neglect, unknowingly, will manifest to exhibit power. As a matter of fact, three different excuses were brought up by Frankenstein to leave his family. When he does not even know his own intentions, it makes it hard for anyone else to believe him, and this furthers his place as the unreliable narrator. Frankenstein also claims he wants to travel to England for the discovery of knowledge instead of only communicating with his professors, and he is afraid of committing an evil deed in his father's home. Was the evil deed the creation of the creature, as is the more obvious answer, or is it the marriage to Elizabeth?

Frankenstein's actions make the questions difficult to answer. Though Frankenstein had every right to doubt the new creature's intentions, why did Frankenstein desert him based on his appearance in the first place which consequently

led to the base actions of the creature?

Throughout the novel, Frankenstein shows an overarching theme of self-pity in which he showcases some grandeur delusions. Though it is good to admit one's mistakes, pitying oneself is not constructive. It leads to all the acts of hatred based on the perception of his creator's existence inside himself. Desires of many variations can be seen transferred from the creature to his creator and vice versa as another example of the double. Throughout the text, one can see the different results from when Frankenstein selfishly abandons this creature and seems to see a responsibility and a reflection of himself within the creature's gaze. Frankenstein's disgust manifests from the sublimity of the creature represented within the gaze of the creature's eyes. The lack of a womb and the desire of parenthood, while Victor also fears parenthood, is exactly what makes his creation seem so sublime to him. Victor is experiencing womb envy with a simultaneous uncanny comfort since he knows he is not a woman and does not really want to be a woman, but instead, he wants to fulfill their role. Karen Horney's more feminist approach to psychoanalysis discusses that womb envy is the envy experienced by some males for the reproductive ability of females, thought of as an unconscious drive which causes them to belittle women (145). Frankenstein hates what he wants to be, and what he sees manifest in the creature represents his hate. The notion of castration anxiety also applies here. Castration anxiety is a concept by Sigmund Freud which deals with the fear of losing an important organ (the penis, testicles, or any organ of importance) which excites violent emotion or defense ("Uncanny" 7).

Frankenstein capitulates his abuse by delivering it to others. Though at the end of the novel, Frankenstein understands that his transgressions have wreaked havoc, he still insists on placing the ultimate blame on the "inherent" evilness of the creature whom he created. Though he recognizes that the creature suffers, Frankenstein claims that he has suffered more though he supposedly believes he deserved the suffering. The true character of Frankenstein truly

shows his selfishness and passive aggressiveness when he is on his deathbed and claims that he does not want to force the narrator, and captain of the ship, Walton to find his creation, yet he asks Walton “to undertake his work only induced by reason and virtue.” Frankenstein’s own trauma seems to be exaggerated based on a spoiled upbringing that ended with his mother’s death.

Regarding the childlike nature of the creature, there are key articles that bring up the key issues as they relate to psychoanalysis and the development of the characters based on human evolution. C.G. Buckley’s article, “Psychoanalysis, ‘Gothic’ Children’s Literature, and the Canonization of *Coraline*,” develops upon childhood psychoanalysis and argues that in many literary texts, children are not speaking subjects and are, instead, expected to live as objects to other characters. Buckley’s concept relates to the creature since no one listens to him, other than Walton. The gaze of the creature instantly drives everyone away, and he is expected to be subservient to his creator. Joan Copjec explains the opposite of the double in comparison to the uncanny in “Vampires, Breast-Feeding, and Anxiety.” The author believes that Frankenstein’s monster is not uncanny because his existence tries to make meaning, and his life does follow a path. Copjec makes these distinctions to explain that Frankenstein sees his monster as a child suckling the strength and negation out of its “mother” rather than an uncanny, gothic double. After all, Victor Frankenstein is more of a passive victim to his creation. His passivity is a failure that maintains the symbolic nature containing the negation of the real. The true character cannot be revealed, but it is structural, not accidental. All this information is very crucial to show the many roles of Frankenstein and possibly show how through history, interpretations of the macabre and mysteriousness of the book have changed.

The son is the creature in *Frankenstein* who is a childlike creation. By all purposes, the creature is the child of Frankenstein. Moreover, the creature is the submissive double of Frankenstein who yearns to overcome his master. He is a symbol of all Victor Frankenstein wants to

repress. Victor is submissive to his creation because he is responsible for creating him, so he chooses to make the creature submissive to him to repress his submissiveness. Though the creature ends up wreaking havoc all around him and kills his creator’s loved ones, the creature did not start out as a vicious monster. The creature discovers abuse from inflexible people around him. Furthermore, I argue that the evilness from Frankenstein seems so pervasive to the creature that he believes all of Frankenstein’s relatives are unjust and evil as well. In many ways, the creature is an anti-hero for himself and outsiders in general. Never being able to attain the appearance of love like Elizabeth and Frankenstein shared, and never being able to attain the purity and beauty of Justine, the creature made the aforementioned people subjects of his repressed desires. However, in the end, the creature displays his remorse by spending more time complaining about his own actions than complaining about others and explaining his yearning for the love of his creator. He even goes so far as to say that it is only natural for people to be afraid of him. The creature only wonders why his appearance is so atrocious to superficial humans and believes he did nothing wrong.

The creature’s inhumanity adds to his uncanniness that leads to his neglect and then his abuse. The uncanny is an affect that is represented in Frankenstein’s creation with his similarity, yet strangeness, and it comes from the sublimity of the creation’s role as the object when it takes place of the thing, i.e. the power of Frankenstein’s mother, Caroline, and the void the creation fills in her absence. Freud mentions this concept as it applies to the general population in “The Uncanny” (195). Not only is the creature sublime, by the definition of being supreme, large, and great, but the concurrent symbolism of The Alps also represents sublimity in the book. In Frankenstein’s travels, mountains, The Alps, precipices, and rivers are everywhere. In all their different representations, the natural forms in the environment are as complicated and chameleon as the creature. Consider this passage:

This part of the Rhine... presents a singularly variegated landscape. Rugged hills, ruined castles, overlooking tremendous precipices, with the dark Rhine rushing beneath; on the sudden turn of a promontory, flourishing vineyards, with green sloping banks, and a meandering river, and populous towns occupy the scene. (Shelley 136)

The passage shows the diversity and formidability of the landscape that makes it so frightening. Furthermore, the creature's sublimity is also represented in his place as the sublime object. The creature is literally irretrievable. He is the object which takes place of the desired thing that cannot be grasped. He himself cannot be grasped either. He is transient. This is represented through his ability to climb The Alps, the motif which symbolizes him, and his ability to escape Frankenstein's clutches by moving faster than humanly possible.

Furthermore, the creature is not completely domineering. He is also very submissive to the idea of a perfect family, and he is even very sensitive to rejection from strangers. He, contrary to his creator, seems to be irrevocably compassionate and empathetic even in times of violence and vengeance. Before his demise, the creature wanted to be among the humans, and he learned a lot about the "sanguinary" tales of humans from the family he watched in isolation. When the creature goes into hiding and maintains his position to learn from an intriguing family, he becomes overwhelmingly attached. When the creature finally introduces himself to the family, and is shunned, he claims to have vengeance, sorrow, and hatred in his heart to never attempt to bond with humans again. The feelings are extrapolated upon in his quote about the family:

"His [Felix's] father, to whose knees I clung: in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground, and struck me violently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sunk within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained. (Shelley 148)

The rejection damages the creature. Furthermore, acting out mischief for the creature could be part of the path of speaking the human

language. The conformist actions are subconscious for the creature because he believes that he is fighting humanity by showing them the errors of their ways through his own actions. Instead, he is just reinsuring their prejudices towards him. However, he submits to Felix and the old, blind man, so his conformity changes in their presence. For once, the creature realized showing kindness and docility would be more in his favor. Yet, even this is not enough, so he resorts back to his crimes. The trauma of the creature really climaxes here. It is created by his unique attributes that make him homely in appearance, and the furtherance of neglect and fear from those around him make the situation worse.

After he returns to his old ways, the creature aims to express dominance and masculinity as much as possible and to overcome his master. The creature is impossible to destroy, but Frankenstein has social relationships which are a core part of him and that are easily destroyable to the creature. The creature says, "Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends" (Shelley 93). The creature's words are worsened with his gaze. His eyes and the reflection of his feelings and relation to Frankenstein are shown in the gaze. The gaze of the creature introjects the hatred towards his creator onto the creator's point of vulnerability-his family.

Sublimation explains the gaze. Freud's concept of sublimation is best described as "A type of defense mechanism in which unacceptable impulses or idealizations are unconsciously transformed into socially acceptable actions or behavior" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 52-65). Sublimation takes on an interesting role with the creature's actions. Though sublimation usually regards finding pleasure through productive substitute activities instead of those which carry risk or danger, sublimation does carry danger for the creature. The creature believes that the life of his creator is more important to maintain than the

creator's family members' lives, so his displacement of rage to the family members protects his creator. The creature's gaze of torture for his creator is sublimated by his need to protect him, but in protecting his creator while hurting his loved ones, he still tortures Frankenstein. Frankenstein is the subject of the sublimation which makes the preservation of his life, at the cost of his loved ones, the acceptable alternative, and in turn, he is still under the creature's powerful gaze and doubling. After all, the creature wants to develop a bond with the creator, and he wants to dominate the creator by making his life miserable in the process to prove a point.

The "socially acceptable" behaviors are misconstrued because of the creature's place as the double. As I discussed above, the creature's presence as the double means that he sees his creator inside of himself. However, David Ketterer's analysis explains that Frankenstein sees the creature inside of HIMSELF as well. Frankenstein is afraid of the creature's gaze because it shows the monster within himself, and he does not like the vulnerable, unloved presence, though ironically, Frankenstein is the reason the creature is unloved, and apparently, he is prescient of this. Ketterer also explains that the split into two beings creates an androgyny for the characters. An example of the development of apathy and ambiguity which Frankenstein sees in the creature, but that originated from Frankenstein, is shown by the creature's killing of Frankenstein's brother William. William is the first family member of Frankenstein's whom the monster kills, and William is not very kind to the creature when the creature grabs him by the arm while saying that he will not hurt him. William screams, "'Monster! Ugly wretch! You wish to eat me, and tear me to pieces-You are an ogre-Let me go, or I will tell my papa'" (Shelley 126). The passage foreshadows the isolation of the creature because of people's unwillingness to accept him and their desire to expose him.

After Frankenstein neglects his own creature, the creature abuses everyone else around him as well. The feeling of neglect from individuals whom the creature is kind to creates the rage

involved in his abuse which, yet again, reflects the creature's place as the double of Frankenstein. The once curious and emotional Victor that wanted to positively change science and people became angry and cold. His empathy became uncanny, and this is transferred to the creature immediately since when the creature was created, Victor immediately shunned him. Throughout the book, the empathy and emotional struggle of the creature is very evident. Even after the creature receives hatred from the family he watched, when he sees a little girl run into a lake and almost drown, he instinctively rushes after her to save her. Yet, as an eternal child figure, the creature maintains his place in the mirror stage. The theory discusses the transformation which takes place in the subject when he assumes an image and, typically, an identification during infancy ("The Mirror Stage" 503). The creature identifies as a monster who has no one to which he can turn, and this leads to his place as merely a double of his creator. When people think he is attacking the girl, just like the family he loved believed him to be atrocious, he gives in to the self-fulfilling prophecy out of anger of the unfairness. He starts to believe them too. He explains his feelings:

He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish. Some years ago, when the images which this world affords first opened upon me, when I felt the cheering warmth of summer and heard the rustling of the leaves and the warbling of the birds, and these were all to me, I should have wept to die; now it is my only consolation. Polluted by crimes and torn by the bitterest remorse, where can I find rest but in death? (Shelley 189)

The creature ostensibly no longer cares if he or anyone else dies. It seems that the creature begins to kill the relatives of Frankenstein to try and extract empathy from him by showing Frankenstein his own sins.

An idea that has not been discussed often is that which includes the creature's incestual desires. The creature does not have a mother, or any true, nurturing parents for that matter, and the



original object of desire, in psychoanalytic interpretation, is the parent during the child's developmental stages. The Oedipus Complex and libidinal desires of the id turn into aggression for the creature. As Freud discusses in *Civilization and its Discontents*, aggression is just as much part of the libido, though regarding the death drive, as sex is. The creature obviously is displacing his desires for his father onto murder as a retaliation due to guilt. Moreover, Oedipal Complexes as per Freud can be directed towards either gender of a parent, as Freud points out in his later theories, if it is still a complex inside a male, or genderless, mind. The creature experiences desire and love for some of the people he murdered that took a place of his Oedipus Complex towards his father.

Steven Lehman, in "The Motherless Child in Science Fiction: Frankenstein and Moreau," studied womb envy, in regards to the role of Frankenstein and his creation, which causes the act of projecting feminization on each other in a way to dominate women, themselves, and their insecurities. Lehman brings up the Oedipus Complex and castration complex regarding both characters. Furthermore, the creature and Frankenstein are both afraid of losing their identities, or never gaining them, and dying, until the end. The creature wants to overcome all the family members of Frankenstein, but he is particularly interested in killing the women in Frankenstein's life so that he cannot experience love like the creature cannot. Arguably, the creature wanted to be companions with Justine as well and kills her because he knows it cannot happen. The creature's jealousy and desire to be loved as a human cause him to lash out in his odd sense of guilt and remorse for himself. He kills Justine because of his assumption that no one beautiful and pure like her could love him, and she is blamed in the end. Yet, Frankenstein knows the creature killed Justine and becomes even more committed to exposing the creature. The creature's role of being an outcast begins yet again.

Only one person, Walton, felt empathy towards the creature. Walton becomes important

throughout the book as the only symbolization of simultaneous goodness and fairness. Walton is the only reliable narrator who creates letters that transcribe all of Frankenstein and the creature's tales word-for-word. He is the only being who does not seem to have any unconscious issues which perturb him. The id is the primitive part of the mind that contains sexual and aggressive drives, i.e. the creature; the super-ego operates as a conscience, i.e. Frankenstein; and the ego is the realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the super-ego which appears to only take place through Walton. He finds the story strange and explains that there would be no advantage to summarize or shorten any information in the letters to his sister.

Furthermore, Walton is ready to defend his friend, but he finally questions him long enough to be the first person, beyond Frankenstein, to listen to the creature's story. Walton's goodness is apparent to everyone around him, including the creature.

Walton represents the displacement of the creature's anger towards Frankenstein differently than everyone else does. The creature actually talks to Walton instead of killing him because he can look the creature in the eye and understand him without running away in fear. Walton is the only character who does not encapsulate the uncanny or sublime for anyone else in the story. Here, the creature shows a moral compass which can be relatable to readers. If one is treated kindly and like a person, then they will treat others kindly because of nurture and nature. Humans are guided by primal instinct like animals, and Walton is the protagonist which does not make anyone's defenses build up.

No matter how much one analyzes *Frankenstein*, there continues to be much to learn about the story. My focus on narrative structure and discursive presentation of the sequence of events in the book, i.e. the discussion of the reliability of the narrator, reveals that all the characters are very much alike because they all just want to be understood and to obtain power. However, through my own interpretation already, I have observed that The Alps produce a formidable presence upon the characters with

their symbolism that encapsulates a phallic presence beyond the sublimity they manifest for everyone around them. The circumstance here displays how everything else occurs concurrently. The discrepancy between the narrator, the events, the creature, and the reader shows that a lot needs to still be studied in *Frankenstein*. Further inspection of critical interpretations of *Frankenstein* and similar stories show a lot about the common theme of the unconscious in Gothic literature.

Stories inform the way readers structure and understand experiences. One of the greatest contributions to the experience of the relation of the unconscious and conscious is Sigmund Freud's analysis of "The Sandman" by ETA Hoffman. His discussion of the Oedipus and castration complexes led to the more concrete representations of his theories. Later, more literature and self-analysis helped Freud come up with theories. Freud's relation to others helped him see the perspective of empathy needed to understand the anxiety and drives of others. The creature sees the perspective of others while reading. *Frankenstein* furthers the Meta reading inside of a reading, particularly when the creature reads *Paradise Lost* and uses it to interpret the family with whom he wishes to be a part. Outsiders, or people that can simultaneously create feelings of remorse and empathy as well as threatening feelings for others, can teach readers or writers about the wrongful actions everyone, including themselves, partake in at one point or another. In the creature's case, feeling empathy made him feel more hatred for others as if he knows prejudice people are insecure and angry at themselves and take it out on others. In turn, he feels vengeance and guilt for the vengeance. Even people who critique books can have elements of their own biases, insecurities, or arguments within their like or dislike of any book. *Frankenstein* brings much to the surface about the unconscious of readers who choose to delve into it.

Though Freud did not comment on *Frankenstein* directly, his comments about the uncanny in relation to *Sandman* have been very influential and explanatory as to the feeling

people have when something is just not how it should be, regardless of what is on the surface. Freud explains that the Sandman ripped out children's eyes to create a castration complex. Furthermore, *The Sandman* is an uncanny story because of the uncertainty involved in the reality of this imaginative monster, and the uncertainty which happens when one is robbed of their eyes, but it becomes certain, later, that the Sandman, as told by Nathaniel, is real. Still, anxiety exists in the confirmation of eternal intellectual uncertainty for the characters ("The Uncanny" 139). The Sandman is much like Frankenstein's creature with his crimes in the abduction of children's eyes, as a representation of the creature's abduction of children's livelihood, but he is also a representation of Frankenstein taking away independence and nurturance from his creature. One may argue that the problem, the unfamiliar, with Frankenstein's creature is, precisely, his appearance, but it is also true that his personality takes the place of the seemingly familiar while his looks are the "unheimlich", uncanny, part of him.

The unfamiliar, or "unheimlich," in Freud's life appears to be an unconscious representation of his own relationships in the manifestation of his theories. Sigmund Freud's interpretations that everything has a connection with sexuality has become absurd by modern psychological standards, but, fortunately, Freud has also made a significant impact with literary criticism. The sometimes-absurd philosophical viewpoints of the Godfather of Psychology can be very helpful in looking at fictional tales. Oddly enough, Freud has admitted to his own issues with the Oedipus Complex, and though not overwhelmingly a part of his life, he, indeed, struggled with familial issues. Freud experienced the uncanny as well. Freud's life experiences show the correlation to his psychoanalytic theories and case studies that would eventually be used for literary purposes. Freud was not open to new discoveries or additions to his theories of psychoanalysis until later in his life. One could argue that the transference of his wariness of potential inadequacy was put on to his colleagues who he feared would surpass him. Freud discovered

trauma that repressed his own knowledge of what created insight into his theory. All thoughts have a basis.

The creature also transferred his thoughts of inadequacy on to others including characters in books of whom he becomes envious. *Paradise Lost* was referenced in *Frankenstein* because the creature reads it when he is alone and trying to learn about himself. He finds the representation of his feelings within the book. Though the act of reading creates ecstasy for the creature, he also begins to realize how much of a fish out of water he really is and how dejected he is within society. Though the volume he reads includes many other stories, *Paradise Lost* evokes the most emotion for the creature. He feels a connection to Adam who was one of a kind, but he is different in the respect that Adam was happy, alone, and first before other humans. Furthermore, he was respected by his creator (Shelley 154). Frankenstein is much like a god to the creature as well, but he is an unkind, unhelpful god. Furthermore, the book begins to create envy for the creature which helps create the uncanny affect within him and between him and the other characters. The creature begins to foreshadow more of his confusion and downward spiral when he explains that he feels doomed to be the spawn of a Satan archetype. This comment alludes to his violence and perpetual lack.

Some interpretations of *Frankenstein* elicit lack and confusion regarding the creature's lack. Ostensibly, there are imperfections and flaws in any research due to other conflicting research. Interpretations are highly subjective and there are many interpretations that stray from the original author's intentions. Still, I disagree with some of the interpretations I have found, particularly in further film adaptations of *Frankenstein*, but further investigation into their arguments and reasonings can support my point of view as well. In the movie adaptation of *Frankenstein* from 1931, directed by James Whale, the creature is actually programmed with a bad brain. Since the creature's body is taken from the pieces of corpses, Frankenstein supposedly acquires an evil, insane mind that he programs into the creature.

Though it is commonplace for movie adaptations to not include a lot of information which the book version does, it is surprising that the movie adds a detail so far removed from the book's point. I believe Whale's interpretation is more insidiously different than intended. It is essential to recognize the creature's nurture in his development. Whale's perspective leaves out the crucial element for the theme of *Frankenstein*. No matter how much one chooses to investigate the book, the resolution of the story shows the creature's pity for his actions and how his lack of love from his father is to blame.

The most vital component of *Frankenstein* is that the creature does feel empathy and sympathy and does want to create bonds with humans. He is merely nurtured poorly. Whale's interpretation takes away the focus on the neglect and trauma outsiders face, and it perpetuates the stereotypes of abused individuals who appear and act differently than others. Furthermore, it displays a lack of understanding in regard to monsters in literature. Many movies such as *Dracula*, *Maleficent*, and *Rocky Horror Picture Show* have also repeated Whale's sins, but some have tried to mediate them. After all, it is fine to take a story and re-spin the theme and action in the plot, but, in doing so, it should not completely derail the original argument and symbolism in the message so as to not refute the author's intent or to disrespect it. In *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, the creature is a slave to his creator, and he wants to love someone else. He is in the human form, however, and he evidently is being suppressed and nurtured into ignorance. Rocky shows the empathetic side to the symbolism of the creature in *Frankenstein*. In *Maleficent* the viewer will also see what horrible experiences lead to Maleficent's evilness towards the princess. Maleficent was abused, and her wings were taken from her, so she wanted to get back at the spoiled princess who was related to the culprit. Broadway plays have even taken the *Frankenstein* theme in stories such as *Wicked*. There really are two sides to every story, and it is important to consider this in storytelling and analysis.

Characters within a story from the romantic era and gothic subgenre are still much like the characters in stories today. The evolution of characters throughout the history of stories looks similar in many instances. Furthermore, the fact that people's true character can be reflected within story characters explicates the macabre possibilities of human beings and their minds. Human beings can be very unforgiving and relentless to others they do not understand or of whom they are afraid. The creation of someone else, especially as technology progresses, can hold part of the creator or be something unintended which can create more problems than ever before. Analyses of the different books and media related to Frankenstein capitalize on the fact that history repeats itself and humans will never completely change. As Frances McAndrew and Sarah Koehnke discuss in "On the Nature of Creepiness," books like *Dracula*, *The Sandman*, and others that I will not discuss here, encapsulate examples of the issues which humans face from the hands of other humans. The symbols of monsters only represent disgusting humans or humans that have been disgusted for far too long (McAndrew and Koehnke 12). One could argue that the true monster in *Frankenstein* is the human in control of the creature. Furthermore, the creature is not called monster in most literary discussions because of his human-like qualities regarding compassion and love.

To most who believe that the creature is still a representation of a monster, he is the representation of the jaded, ostracized human. "The creature" is a better name which explains the mixture of humanity and monstrosity in the creature's personality. The animalism of the creature which comes from the mix represents the inhuman qualities of the creature that still contain relational aspects as if the creature was a herd animal. However, calling the creature an animal would still not be sufficient to explain the multifaceted reality and parts of the creature. In many ways, the creature is just an unevolved human who is a victim to his primal instincts. As I said earlier, the creature is a child who never has a chance to grow. He is never really born. He is

only conscious as the man-made form he will always be. Moreover, the creature is born in his adult state with a primal mind which is like being a perpetual animal. Discussion of animalism helps explain how human and animal evolution begets discrimination towards children or childlike figures, and it explains why certain people discriminate against their own genetics and ability to be a good mate.

Frankenstein is a prime example of someone who doubts his own ability to be a father, and he turns to creating his offspring rather than reproducing the natural way. Furthermore, the creature does not fit the ideal genetics that Frankenstein unconsciously desired which leads to the creature's uncanniness. The evolutionary psychologist David Buss coined kin altruism theory which discusses different motivations based through time. The theory specifies why people participate in adultery and other deceptions, decide to not have children but help related children instead, and look for certain genotypic and phenotypic characteristics rather than personality characteristics in mating (Buss 269-293). The importance of Buss's book for psychology explains why people are so resistant to change, and how we can adjust ourselves, but we can never change our true desires. Frankenstein wanted to create something he would be proud of, but because it was not his natural offspring, and it was not genotypically or phenotypically ideal, the relationship does not fare well. Oddly enough, as I mentioned before, Frankenstein has his own insecurities that make him uncomfortable mating with his more-than-sister. Though he does not commit adultery, he deceives his family in the creation of the creature, and he is as uncomfortable marrying Elizabeth, and therefore reproducing with her, as he is with his own genetics being passed on. He does not want to end up like his father, so he takes the motherly role instead.

Without the study of the sublime and the uncanny affect, it would be difficult to look at the unconscious motives that make people treat others unfairly. The research above supports the idea that the sublime has a certain lack which leads to a

childlike nature, and the uncanny affect shows the consequences and feelings of confusion with the desire of control that stem from the sublime. Though further research could be included to delve more into the usage of literature, the critical analysis makes that next step smoother. In the future, I would like to look at how literature can be used in therapeutic contexts, how Mary Shelley's life explains the analysis of the uncanny affect and the sublime with their relation to *Frankenstein*, and I am interested in learning more about evolutionary theories, such as kin altruism theory, in their connection to prejudice. I hope this paper serves as a guide to answer those questions and aid in the continued issues in a modern society which does not include as many readers as it used to.

Still, the insight of people who have not suffered neglect, abuse, or trauma and researchers alike has only grown with time and the furtherance of civilized society. For example, anti-bullying campaigns are beginning to be considered more and taken more seriously. Furthermore, the empathy of society has grown along with technology and industrialization. More access to the backstories of criminals and victims alike have helped psychologists understand how nurture plays a bigger role than nature in creating a person, at times. There are now laws in place to make sure that people do not abuse others in experimentation since unethical methods have taken place in the past. There are anti-discrimination laws in schools, workplaces, and the government. Judging people based on their appearance or choices is still troublingly common, but violence against these people is illegal in any circumstance in most first world countries. Movies and books, as well as the study of philosophy in psychology within these media, have aided in the education of students, citizens, and educators alike.

## REFERENCES

- Bachant, Janet L., et al. "The Evolution Drive in Contemporary Psychoanalysis: A Reply to Gill." *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1995, pp. 565-573. *PsycNET*, <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/pap/12/4/565.pdf>. Accessed 23 September 2016.
- Buckley, C. G. "Psychoanalysis, "Gothic" Children's Literature, and the Canonization of *Coraline*." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 40 no. 1, 2015, pp. 58-79. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/chq.2015.0008.
- Buss, David M., *The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. Print.
- Copjec, Joan. "Vampires, Breast-Feeding, and Anxiety." *October*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1991, pp. 24-43. *JSTOR*. Print.
- Dolar, Mladen. "'I Shall be with You on Your Wedding-Night': Lacan and the Uncanny." *The MIT Press*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1991, pp. 5-23. *JSTOR*. Print.
- Fragar, Robert., Paris, Bernard J., and James Fadiman. *Personality and Personal Growth*. "Karen Horney and Humanistic Psychoanalysis." New Jersey: Pearson, 2013.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Kindle ed., London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1920.
- Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. New York: Norton, 1962, Print.
- "The Uncanny." New York: Norton, 1919, <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>. Accessed 26 November 2016.
- Ketterer, David. "Androgyny Vs. Bifurcation: A Psychological Reading of *Frankenstein*." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1987, pp. 267-270. *Humanities Source*. Web. Accessed 7 October 2016.
- Keyishian, Harry. "Vindictiveness and the Search for Glory in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*." *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 49, no. 3, 1989, pp. 201-210. Web. Accessed 14 October 2016.

- Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience." London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1949.
- Lehman, Steven. "The Motherless Child in Science Fiction: Frankenstein And Moreau." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1992, pp. 49-58. *Humanities Source*, Web. Accessed 5 October 2016
- McAndrew, Frances T., and Sara S. Koehnke. "On the Nature of Creepiness." *New Ideas in Psychology*, vol. 43, 2016, pp. 10-15. *ResearchGate*, doi: 10.1016/j.newideapsych.2016.03.003. Accessed 23 September 2016.
- Price, J. S. "The Westermarck Trap: A Possible Factor in the Creation of Frankenstein." *Ethology & Sociobiology*, vol. 16, no. 5, 1995, pp. 349-353. Print. Accessed 7 October 2016
- Shelley, Mary, ed. *Frankenstein*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2000. Print.
- Westermarck, Edvard. *The History of Human Marriage*. Kindle ed., London; New York: Macmillan & Co., 1891.
- Zizek, Slavoj. "The Sublime Object of Ideology." Phronesis Series. Ed. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. New York: Verso, 1989.
- . "Grimaces of the Real, or When the Phallus Appears." *October*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1991, pp. 45-68. Print.